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依歡的個人小檔案

10月19日生
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漫畫◎依歡

緋色王城

Scarlet Palace

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血吻

緋色王城 4
漫畫◎依歡

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血腥的滅族陰謀之中，隱隱情愫滋生…

六年前公子珣回到定國，面對的卻是冷漠的母妃。
為了讓公子珣邁向大王之位，陵紜不惜對公子珣的母親下手…
景氏世族被大王貶為庶民，零湖卻進入豪華宮殿生活。
恢復女子身分的零湖，在面對家族翻身的期望之下，會斷然邁向王后之路？
而大王與陵紜之間的關係，也因零湖的出現產生了變化？

雖然出書很慢，但是也爬到第四集了，多謝收看！

2012年初出了一本畫集，《緋色王城 依歡彩繪精選集》這是我第一本畫集，對我來說意義重大，也是一個紀念。主要收錄《真假公主》之後的古裝作品彩稿，以及一些小說封面的插畫。《真假公主》是2000年左右的作品，所以算是收錄了十多年的畫作，前後畫風真是慢慢在改變啊！不知不覺感觸也多了。希望一路陪我走來的讀者多多支持，也希望下一本畫集不要等這麼久。

至於《緋色王城》，這一集大王的戲份比較多，之後算是要幫助三人間複雜的三角關係囉！而一直喊的宮廷陰謀，也算是要正式的上場了，所以別忘繼續收看，第五集見！

東立
NT-95

緋色王城
Scarlet Palace
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人物介紹

景淵

負責後宮一切事物的王后少府大人，也是策劃寧湖成為王后的主謀。

陵鈺

戚國人，貌美如女人一般的男子。為淀王所寵信，捉摸不定的個性。

景寧湖

景氏家族的女兒，被家族密謀成為王后送入宮中，喜歡身為少府的陵鈺。

前情提要

◆陵鈺答應景淵人，不會將寧湖為女兒身的秘密洩漏出去，以得自身安全與寧湖的相伴。涉未深的寧湖，無意中發現了大王和陵鈺之間有著非比尋常的親密關係…

◆陵鈺派人暗中調查寧湖身分，現寧湖竟為景氏之女，身分是敵國的寧湖處於一片慌亂之中。此時，大王將寧湖從陵鈺的身邊調開，召至身旁隨侍左右。

◆大王命寧湖負責試毒，寧湖親自煮湯的舉動惹惱了大王，也讓陵鈺產生醋勁。就在寧湖醉心於陵鈺的溫柔相伴之際，大王突然將言和寧湖定親過的男子調回都城…

◆淳王珣將景氏族人貶為庶民流放，逃亡未成的寧湖對淵人的冷旁觀感到憤恨不平，淵人卻表自己效忠的對象是大王殿下。

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第十三回 王位之路
Chapter 13: The Road to Becoming King

*XUN-ER is a term of endearment similar to -kun in Japanese context but regardless of gender

I FORGOT MY SHOES!
AH! I WAS IN SUCH A RUSH TO SEE XUN-ER,
IT WASN'T EASY FOR ME TO GET TO SEE YOU!
LET'S GO OUT AND PLAY!
HAHA! THE TRUTH IS I DON'T LIKE TO WEAR SHOES!
LADY SHAOYA...
It's fine! I'm here to take care of him!
My lady!
PLEASE DON'T DRAG THE PRINCE AROUND!
MY LADY!

Prince Xun and his mother, Lady Shaoya
XUN-ER..
She was 12 when she entered the royal seraglio,
And she gave birth to Prince Xun at age 14
DO YOU LIKE YOUR MOTHER?
When Prince Xun was 12, he was sent as a hostage to Qi Kingdom.
He only returned to Ding Kingdom when he was 13.
After that, by the King's orders,
she and Prince Xun lived apart.

MY LADY,
THE PRINCE HAS ARRIVED.
GREETINGS, MOTHER
YOU'RE BACK?

WHAT AN INCONSIDERATE CHILD...
YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT I HATE TO WEAR SHOES.
MY LADY, THIS IS A GIFT FOR YOU FROM THE PRINCE.
JADE SHOES SPECIALLY CRAFTED BY A QI ARTISAN.
YES, I'VE RETURNED FROM QI KINGDOM.

WHO ARE YOU?
MY NAME IS LINGYU.
FROM QI KINGDOM?
RAISE YOUR HEAD.
HE IS A FOLLOWER I BROUGHT FROM QI KINGDOM.
XUN-ER, IF YOU REALLY WISH TO GIVE ME A GIFT,
THEN GIVE HIM TO ME.

SO...
XUN-ER RESCUED YOU FROM A SLAVE MARKET?
THE PRINCE WAS FREEING MAIDENS FROM DING KINGDOM.
I WAS FORTUNATE TO BE ABLE TO FOLLOW HIM.
AND WHO SOLD YOU TO THAT PLACE?
YOUR PARENTS?
YES.
DO YOU BLAME THEM?
NO...
I KNOW THAT MY PARENTS WERE ALSO SUFFERING

I WISH YOU WERE MY SON INSTEAD.
MY LADY?
I CAN NO LONGER BEAR IT THAT HE IS MY SON...
XUN-ER...
A CHILD CAN UNDERSTAND THE SUFFERING THEIR PARENTS GO THROUGH?
YOU SAY...

LINGYU IS TRULY A LOVELY CHILD!
ANYONE WHO MEETS HIM WOULD LIKE HIM.
DON'T YOU AGREE, MY LADY?
I DON'T LIKE HIM.
IT'S JUST THAT IF I DON'T GO TO HIM,
HE'LL COME LOOKING FOR ME HIMSELF.

YOU CAN FORGET THE FORMALITIES OF VISITING ME EVERY DAY.
DON'T COME HERE UNLESS YOU HAVE BUSINESS WITH ME.
I UNDERSTAND.
MY LADY ACTUALLY ENJOYS HER VISITS WITH THE PRINCE...
BUT BECAUSE OF THAT DECREE...
WHAT DECREE?

When the King became ill, he chose Prince Xun to inherit his throne.
He also gave his last imperial decree...
At age 14, she gave birth to Prince Xun.
When the prince reached age 10, she was still quite young
IF PRINCE XUN IS TO BECOME KING...
LADY SHAOYA MUST DIE.
MY LADY MUST BE SUFFERING IN HER HEART.
Lady Shaoya was only 12 when she met the King.
Soon after, she entered the royal seraglio.
The King showered her with affection.

I'VE HEARD THAT YOUTH IS THE VERY REASON THE KING IS WORRIED.
BUT WHY?
JUST BECAUSE SHE IS STILL SO YOUNG?
HE FEARS THAT A YOUNG KING WILL BECOME A PUPPET OF THE NOBLE FAMILIES.
MY LADY IS ONE OF THE YU FAMILY.
THEY ARE STRONGLY OPPOSED TO THE DECREE REGARDING MY LADY'S DEATH.
WHILE THEY AGREE WITH PRINCE XUN BECOMING KING,
THE COURT IS IN DISCORD OVER THIS ISSUE.
SO...
SISTER RU...
I WOULD LIKE TO BETTER UNDERSTAND LADY SHAOYA.
FOR PRINCE XUN TO BECOME KING XUN, HIS MOTHER MUST DIE?
MY LADY DOESN'T SEEM TO MIND IT. SHE ACTS AS IF NOTHING HAS CHANGED.
BUT I CANNOT STOP WORRYING...

MY LADY, IT IS VERY COLD TODAY.
YOU MAY CATCH COLD IF YOU GO BAREFOOT.
I DON'T LIKE TO WEAR SHOES.
I'M MORE COMFORTABLE LIKE THIS.

THAT BOY IS ALWAYS SO DUTIFUL...
IF HE'S LIKE THAT, HOW CAN HE BECOME KING?
WHEN HE GAVE THEM TO ME, I SPURNED HIM.
XUN-ER MUST BE HURT BY THAT, RIGHT?
I ASKED XUN-ER TO BRING ME A PAIR OF FINE SHOES FROM QI KINGDOM.
YOU PROBABLY KNOW...
SOMEONE ELSE ASKED HIM TO GIVE THESE SHOES TO YOU, MY LADY.
WHAT?
MY LADY,
PRINCE XUN DID NOT GIVE YOU THOSE SHOES BECAUSE YOU ASKED FOR SHOES.

BEFORE HE DIED, THE LATE KING INSTRUCTED THE PRINCE...
TO HAVE THESE SHOES MADE AND RETURN TO DING KINGDOM TO GIVE TO YOU, MY LADY.
YOU SEE, THE PURPLE PEARLS ON THE TOPS...
CAN ONLY BE FOUND IN A SECRET RIVER IN QI KINGDOM.
I WILL TAKE MY LEAVE.
THIS IS...

SHAOYA,
WHY DO YOU NEVER WEAR SHOES?
MY KING, I DON'T LIKE TO WEAR SHOES!
IF YOU BECOME QUEEN, HOW COULD YOU NOT WEAR SHOES?
HOW MIGHT I MAKE YOU DO AS I SAY?
I WILL DO WHATEVER YOU ASK!
THEY MUST HAVE THOSE RARE PURPLE PEARLS ON THEM!
WELL... MY KING WOULD HAVE TO GIVE ME SOME VERY SPECIAL SHOES.
IF MY KING GIVES ME SUCH A SPECIAL PAIR OF SHOES...

I promised to do anything you ask...
I won't forget..
But...
Is this truly what you want?
In the end... you really gave me these shoes...
My King...
The moment I first met you..
my fate may have already been sealed

I HEAR...
PRINCE XUN IS SURROUNDED BY MINISTERS AGAIN...
AND THE DECREE ABOUT OUR LADY'S DEATH?
SHE'S STILL PRETENDING NOT TO KNOW?
HOW LONG CAN THE YU FAMILY ARGUE IT?
AND HOW LONG CAN OUR LADY ENDURE?
I HAVE BROUGHT THE HOT WATER YOU REQUESTED.
MY LADY!
MY LADY?

MY LADY!
DON'T CALL FOR HELP.
THIS POISON...
IT WON'T TAKE LONG...

I WILL GET A PHYSICIAN!
IT'S NO USE.
THIS IS JUST WHAT THEY'RE WAITING FOR.
NO ONE WILL COME.
IN THIS ROOM...
IS THE ONE WHO POISONED ME.
MY LADY?
TONIGHT, I ONLY DRANK THE TEA YOU BROUGHT FOR ME.
NO ONE ELSE CAME IN HERE.
OTHER THAN MYSELF...
ONLY YOU COULD HAVE POISONED ME.

IF I HADN'T DONE IT MYSELF,
SOONER OR LATER, YOU WOULD HAVE.
MY LADY, I WOULD NEVER POISON YOU...
YOU ARE, MY LADY.
AM I RIGHT?
LINGYU...
YOU WOULD DO ANYTHING...
TO HELP XUN-ER ASCEND THE THRONE.
THAT'S A RELIEF...

I HAVE THE SUDDEN THOUGHT ...
NONE OF THAT WAS TRUE ABOUT THE SHOES, WAS IT?
I RAN BAREFOOT THROUGH FIELDS OF FLOWERS ...
BUT I WAS NEVER ABLE TO RUN AWAY FROM THIS PLACE.
BUT...
YOU LET ME DREAM A VERY SWEET DREAM.

My King...
Are you waiting for me?
Shaoyu is coming to find you now...

I SAID I'M LEAVING THE CAPITAL.
PLEASE ASK GRANDMOTHER TO CHOOSE ANOTHER SUCCESSOR!
WHAT DID YOU SAY?!
MY PRINCE!
IT IS THE DOWAGER EMPRESS'S WISH THAT YOU SUCCEED THE THRONE!
EVEN THE MINISTERS WHO SUPPORTED YOUR UNCLE NOW SUPPORT YOU...
IT WAS ALSO THE WISH OF THE LATE KING...
MY PRINCE! LADY SHAOYA...
I WILL NOT ALLOW MY MOTHER TO DIE BECAUSE OF ME!

LADY SHAOYA IS...
DEAD. POISONED.

POISON?
LADY SHAOYA WAS NEVER VERY FOND OF THE PRINCE...
SHE WOULDN'T HAVE KILLED HERSELF FOR HIM, WOULD SHE?
WHO ATTENDED TO LADY SHAOYA TONIGHT?
MY PRINCE,
ONLY ONE PERSON ATTENDED TO LADY SHAOYA TONIGHT.
IT WAS LINGYU...
WHO?
THE REST OF YOU, OUT!

IT'S EASY TO SEE WHY THE LATE KING WAS APPREHENSIVE.
THE YU FAMILY HAS ENORMOUS POWER AND FAR-REACHING INFLUENCE.
IT'S NOT IMPORTANT.
BECAUSE I WOULD HAVE DONE IT SOONER OR LATER.
WAS IT YOU?
DID YOU POISON HER?
LADY SHAOYA WAS STILL YOUNG, AND MY PRINCE IS STILL NOT YET OF AGE.
NATRUALLY, THE YU FAMILY WOULD HAVE USED HER TO GAIN EVEN MORE POWER.
THE YU FAMILY COULDN'T BE ALLOWED THE OPPORTUNITY.
IF LADY SHAOYA WAS ALLOWED TO LIVE, DISASTER WOULD EVENTUALLY BEFALL THE RDYAL FAMILY.

MY PRINCE...
YOU STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND?
THE ROAD TO BECOMING KING IS PILED WITH COUNTLESS CORPSES.
I'LL NEVER FORGIVE YOU!
JUST YOU WAIT. I WILL HACK YOU INTO PIECES!
WHAT GIVES YOU THE RIGHT TO MAKE THAT DECISION?
YOU THINK I WANT A THRONE STAINED WITH MY MOTHER'S BLOOD?
FOR EXAMPLE, THE FIRST NECESSARY THING...
WAS FOR THE OLD KING TO DIE.

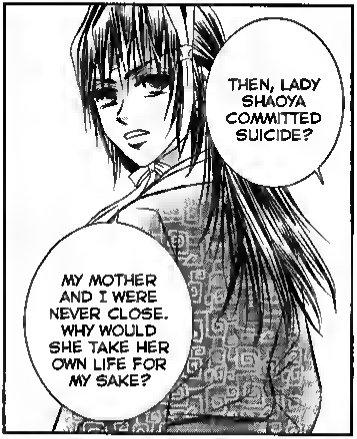
IF I DIDN'T BECOME KING...
SHUT UP!
SHE WOULDN'T HAVE HAD TO DIE!
NOBODY WOULD HAVE DIED!
YOU SAID...
YOU'D LET US ESCAPE OUR LIVES ON THE STREET.
YOU SAID YOU'D BUILD A KINGDOM HUNDREDS OF TIMES STRONGER THAN QI KINGDOM...
MY PRINCE, HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN WHAT YOU SAID TO ME BEFORE?

WERE THOSE WORDS...
JUST A JOKE?

MY PRINCE?
MY PRINCE?
YOU MEAN...?
SORRY TO MAKE YOU WAIT.
PLEASE INFORM MY GRANDMOTHER ...
PREPARE MY MOTHER'S FUNERAL AS BEFITS A QUEEN.
XUN ACCEPTS THE TASK OF SUCCEEDING THE THRONE,
AND WILL BECOME DING KINGDOM'S ONE AND ONLY SOVEREIGN KING.

In accordance with King Xun's first order...

The circumstances of Lady Shaoya's death were never investigated...



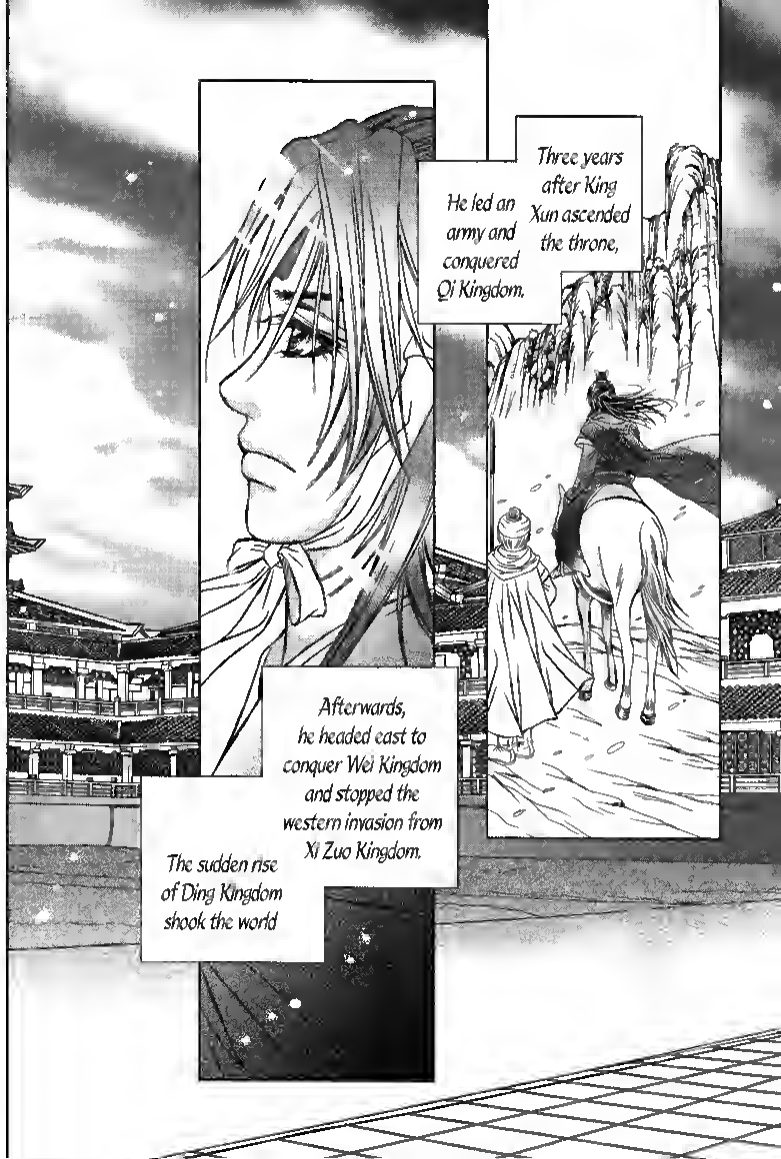
LIAR!
I ONLY TOLD YOU ABOUT LADY SHADYA'S PAST...
BECAUSE YOU SAID THE PRINCE MIGHT UNDERSTAND HER BETTER!
I NEVER THDUGHT YOU WOULD USE THAT TD KILL HER!
LADY SHAOYA KILLED HERSELF
YOU WON'T FOOL ME!
IT WAS ALWAYS YOUR INTENT TO KILL LADY SHADYA!
I SAW... THE SAME POISON HIDDEN IN YOUR ROOM!
YOU DESPICABLE BASTARD!

I DID HAVE THE POISON READY.
BUT... IT WAS MEANT FOR YOU.
LADY SHAOYA'S MOST TRUSTED MAIDS SHOULD FOLLOW HER INTO THE AFTERLIFE.
THEY KNOW TOO MANY SECRETS.
LINGYU... THE PRINCE WILL SEE THROUGH YOUR ACT ONE DAY!
YOU LIAR FROM QI KINGDOM!
YOU'RE WRONG...
THE PRINCE HAS ALREADY SEEN THROUGH ME.
THAT'S WHY...
I FOLLOW HIM SO DESPERATELY.

Prince Xun was crowned King of Ding at age 13.
Lady Shaoya...
Your son will understand the suffering you have gone through.

A few years later,
Because the Yu family had offended the King of Ding, the whole family was sent into exile.
The King of Ding's mother was a daughter of the Yu family..
Because Lady Shaoya had treated Prince Xun so coldly, after her death, everyone in the Yu family was removed from their positions in the palace.
My King will understand why you treated him so coldly
There was no end to their disputes.
The remaining few noble families all fought for power within the palace...
He will understand why you died for all of this

During King Xun's sixth year of as King,
he made the controversial decision to demand 50,000 gold from each noble family
The noble families were considering a coup,
but the King personally led his army against the Jing family.
to protect the King's throne.
King Xun favored Lingyu above all others, causing discontent amongst the noble families
I will do anything...
After Lingyu willingly became a eunuch, King Xun appointed him as Lord Chamberlain straightaway.


Three years after King Xun ascended the throne,
He led an army and conquered Qi Kingdom.
Afterwards, he headed east to conquer Wei Kingdom and stopped the western invasion from Xi Zuo Kingdom.
The sudden rise of Ding Kingdom shook the world

Father...
Lady Shaoya must have helped you realize..
A woman in the palace..
is often just a pawn of the family she comes from.
YOUR MAJESTY.
The only one who can be Queen..
is one who is unburdened by family ties.

So the one I choose as my Queen...
The new Queen will not be her family's pawn.
She will be my pawn, to play or even sacrifice.

She will definitely be a woman I will never fall in love with.

Scanner : Maris
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Shoujo Manga Maniac / www.shoujomanga

第十四回・宮殿禁囚
Chapter 14: Imprisoned in the Palace

MISS NINGHU.

ARE YOU STILL ANGRY?
YOU REALLY...
BETRAYED THE JING FAMILY?

I SEE...
WHEN DID YOU START?
YES.
LONG ...
LONG AGO...
BECAUSE ...
THE FAMILY NEVER APPRECIATED YOUR TALENT. THEY MADE YOU BECOME A EUNUCH AND SENT YOU AWAY...
BUT WE SHARE THE SAME BLOOD...

MISS NINGHU,
YOU STILL BELIEVE I AM A MEMBER OF THE JING FAMILY?
OF COURSE I DO!
I'VE ALWAYS BELIEVED THAT YOU WERE!
I EVEN SOMETIMES THOUGHT WE MIGHT HAVE THE SAME FATHER!
SO NO MATTER WHAT HAS HAPPENED IN THE PAST...
YOU MUST NOT TURN YOUR BACK ON THEM!
THEY ARE YOUR FAMILY!
FATHER... MOTHER...
AND BROTHER KUI CHENG...
I'M VERY WORRIED ABOUT ALL OF THEM...

YOU MUST BECOME QUEEN OF DING!
IF YOU WANT TO SAVE THE JING FAMILY,
THEN...
NOW...
IS NOT THE TIME FOR TEARS.

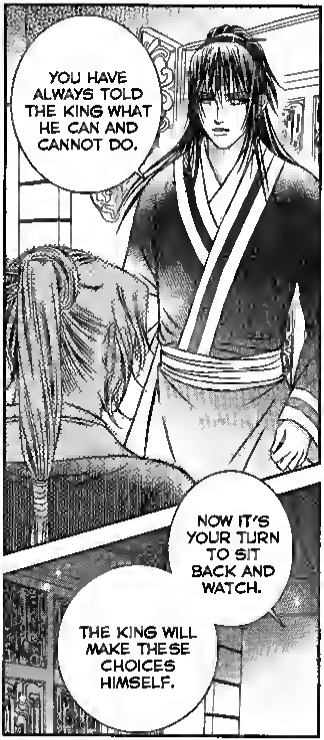
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
IF YOU BECOME QUEEN OF DING,
THEN YOU CAN SAVE THE JING FAMILY.
THE WHOLE JING FAMILY HAS BEEN BANISHED FROM THE KINGDOM.
ONLY YOU HAVE THE POWER TO CHANGE THAT, MISS NINGHU.
AS I'VE SAID...
I WANT MISS NINGHU TO BECOME QUEEN OF DING.
THAT PROMISE HAS NEVER CHANGED.
Brother Yuanren?

ARE YOU ANGRY?
NO, YOUR MAJESTY.
WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME...
ABOUT YOUR PLANS FOR THE JING FAMILY?
THE KING KNOWS VERY WELL WHEN YOU ARE ANGRY.

THAT WAS YOUR PLAN FROM THE VERY START, MY KING?
CORRECT.
YOU SHOULD KNOW WHY...
THE NOBLE FAMILIES HAVE ALWAYS HAD HIDDEN AGENDAS.
IT IS A MAJOR PROBLEM FOR THE KINGDOM. EVENTUALLY THEY MUST ALL BE REMOVED.
YOU ARE ONLY CONCERNED ABOUT THAT PERSON'S FATE, RIGHT?
THAT'S RIGHT.
WHAT SENTENCE DO YOU HAVE IN MIND FOR NINGHU?

YOUR MAJESTY, YOU KNOW IT WAS THE JING FAMILY'S PLOT.
SHE DISGUISED HERSELF AS A MAN TO ENTER THE PALACE.
THAT IS A CRIMINAL ACT OF FRAUD.
SHE WAS ONLY A PAWN.
JING NINGHU...
IS ALSO MY OWN PAWN.
I AM MERCILESS WITH PAWNS THAT ARE OF USE TO ME
AREN'T YOU ALSO THE SAME?

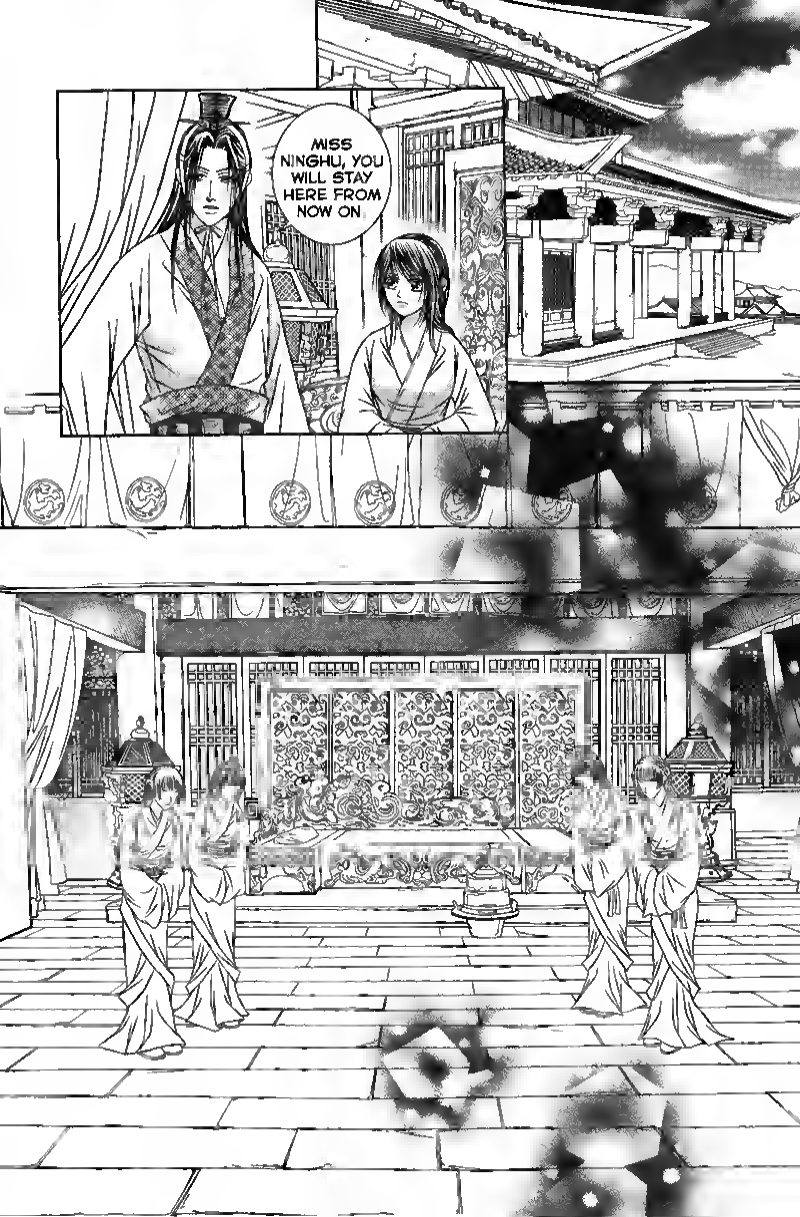
YOU CANNOT DESIRE JING NINGHU.
THE MORE YOU CARE ABOUT HER.
THE MORE MISERABLE HER OUTCOME WILL BE.


YOU HAVE ALWAYS TOLD THE KING WHAT HE CAN AND CANNOT DO.
NOW IT'S YOUR TURN TO SIT BACK AND WATCH.
THE KING WILL MAKE THESE CHOICES HIMSELF.

AND SO...
THE KING WILL NOW TELL YOU WHAT WILL HAPPEN AND WHAT WILL NOT HAPPEN.

OH?
IF THAT'S WHAT YOUR MAJESTY [illegible]...
JING NINGHU...
SHOULD BE SENTENCED AS YOUR MAJESTY SEES FIT.
BUT YOUR MAJESTY IS MISTAKEN ABOUT ONE THING.

I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN A WILLFUL PERSON.
I DON'T NEED ANYONE TO TELL ME WHAT I CAN AND CANNOT DO.
I WILL TAKE MY LEAVE.


MISS NINGHU, YOU WILL STAY HERE FROM NOW ON.

THESE MAIDS WILL BE WAITING ON YOU.
THIS IS...
IF THERE IS ANYTHING ELSE YOU NEED,
PLEASE TELL ME AND I WILL TAKE CARE OF IT.
WHAT IS GOING ON?
AREN'T I A CRIMINAL?
AREN'T I AWAITING A SENTENCE?
WHY AM I STAYING IN SUCH A FINE ROOM?
THIS IS BY THE KING'S ORDERS.
THE KING'S ORDERS?

PLEASE GO TO BED EARLY,
MISS NINGHU.
Yuanren...
WHY?
THE KING PERSONALLY DECLARED SUCH HARSH PUNISHMENT TO THE JING FAMILY...
AND YET NOW...
VERY SOON, YOU WILL KNOW WHY.
MISS NINGHU...
YOU HAVE FINALLY REGAINED YOUR FEMININE APPEARANCE.

I HEAR...
ALL OF THE NOBLE FAMILIES HAVE PAID 50,000 GOLD IN TAXES.
YES, YOUR MAJESTY.
BECAUSE YOU FEAR THE SAME FATE AS THE JING FAMILY?
...
...

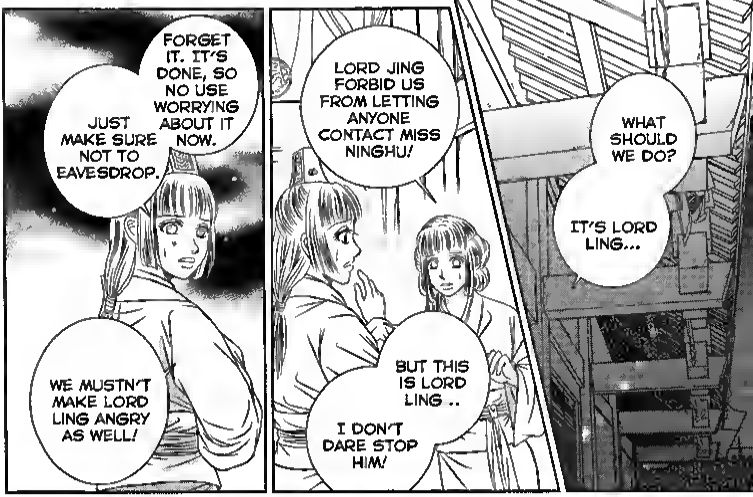
THE GIRL ENTERED THE PALACE UNDER FALSE PRETENCES.
AND LADY MING HE AIDED HER!
SEN-TENCED?
YOUR MAJESTY!
AND THE DECEITFUL DAUGHTER OF THE JING FAMILY SHOULD ALSO BE SENTENCED SOON.
LADY MING HE SHOULD BE REMOVED FROM THE PALACE.
IS THIS THE WILL OF THE DOWAGER EMPRESS?
YES!
SO THE ONLY ONE SUITABLE TO BECOME QUEEN OF DING IS THE DAUGHTER OF THE YI FAMILY
THE KING'S SERAGLIO IS LARGELY COMPOSED OF PRINCESSES FROM FOREIGN KINGDOMS.
THE JING GIRL WHO DISGUISED HERSELF...
WILL REMAIN IN THE PALACE.

THAT DAUGHTER OF THE JING FAMILY...
WILL BECOME...
THE CRIME SHE COMMITTED IS PUNISHABLE BY DEATH!
YOUR MAJESTY SHOULD RECONSIDER AND CARRY OUT HER SENTENCE AT ONCE!
THAT CANNOT BE!
THAT'S ENOUGH.
THE SPEED WITH WHICH YOU JUMP ON OPPORTUNITIES AS THEY PRESENT THEMSELVES
IS TRULY APPALLING.

How did it all come to this?
Because of me the whole Jing family has been banished...
It's only natural I should receive the same punishment.
And yet now I'm staying in such a grand room.
What does the King intend...?

He said that if I become Queen,
I can change the fate of the Jing family
Brother Yuanren...
Can I trust him?
But now I'm a criminal
How can I become Queen?
Further-more...
I don't even want to be Queen.
I just want to be at one particular person's side..

I don't want to become Queen.
NINGHU...
MY LORD!
I only want to stay by one person's side...


WHAT SHOULD WE DO?
IT'S LORD LING...
LORD JING FORBID US FROM LETTING ANYONE CONTACT MISS NINGHU!
BUT THIS IS LORD LING ..
I DON'T DARE STOP HIM!
FORGET IT. IT'S DONE, SO NO USE WORRYING ABOUT IT NOW.
JUST MAKE SURE NOT TO EAVESDROP.
WE MUSTN'T MAKE LORD LING ANGRY AS WELL!

Its not like anything untoward will happen anyway...
After all, Lord Ling is a...
I ALSO DON'T KNOW ..
WHAT THE KING IS PLANNING.

THOUGH HE LETS YOU LIVE HERE,
YOU DON'T HAVE ANY FREEDOM.
SO IN A SENSE YOU ARE STILL IN A JAIL.
BUT WHAT A GRAND JAIL!
LORD LING!
I THINK...
THE KING WON'T DO ANYTHING TO YOU FOR THE TIME BEING.

MY LORD?
THERE'S A RUMOR ABOUT THE WOMEN OF THE JING FAMILY...
IS IT TRUE?
RUMOR?

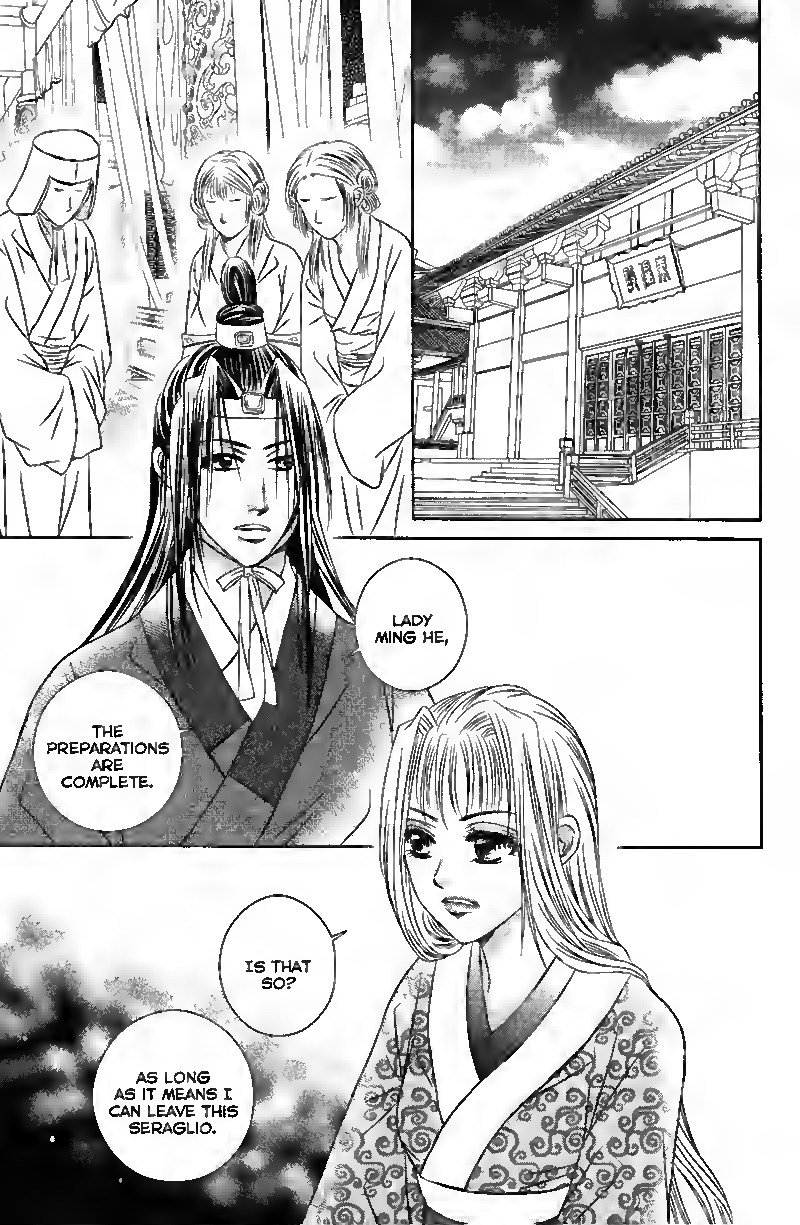
IN AN ATTEMPT TO GAIN THE KING'S AFFECTION,
THE JING FAMILY WOULD TEACH ALL THE SECRETS OF SEDUCTION.
OVER THE YEARS, MANY JING WOMEN HAVE JOINED THE ROYAL SERAGLIO.
RUMOR HAS IT...
AND THAT IS WHY THE JING WIVES HAVE REMAINED FOR SO LONG.
THAT RUMOR HAS ALWAYS BEEN IN THE SERAGLIO.
HAHA!
...!
SOMEONE SAID LADY MING HE KNEW ALL SORTS OF TRICKS.
THAT PERSON WAS JUST JEALOUS, I GUESS.
NO!
THEY FORCE US TO LEARN THOSE...
SO IS IT TRUE?
IT'S NOT! IT'S JUST A MADE-UP RUMOR!

GOSH...
SO WHAT...
IF YOU LEARNED THOSE THINGS?
ALL THAT MATTERS IS THAT I LIKE YOU VERY MUCH...

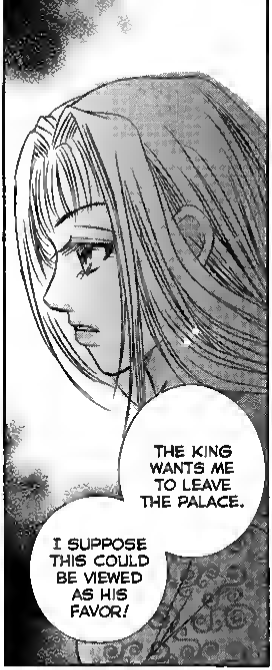
MY LORD, AREN'T YOU...
AREN'T I WHAT?
YOU...
HAHA! OH RIGHT!
YOU THINK THAT I AM...
NINGHU...
DOES IT BOTHER YOU THAT I'M A EUNUCH?
OF COURSE NOT, MY LORD!
INDEED...
SOME SECRETS ARE BETTER REVEALED LATER THAN SOONER.

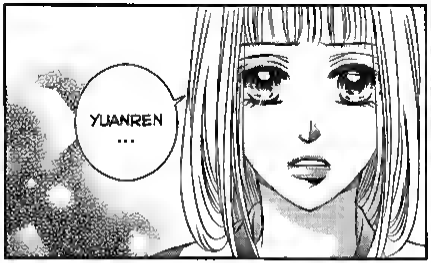
NINGHU...
YOU ARE TRULY ADORABLE ...

MISS NINGHU, GOOD NEWS!
THE KING HAS JUST DECLARED ...
WHAT ARE YOU SO BUSY WITH?
HURRY!
HURRY WITH THE PREPA-RATIONS!
MISS NINGHU WILL BECOME AN IMPERIAL CONSORT.
Eh?
HE WILL BE COMING OVER TONIGHT.
HOLD... HOLD ON A SECONND!
MISS, I MEAN, MY LADY, YOU MUST ALSO BE DRESSED BEAUTIFULLY!
THE KING HASN'T VISITED THE SERAGLIO IN AGES!


LADY MING HE,
THE PREPARATIONS ARE COMPLETE.
IS THAT SO?
AS LONG AS IT MEANS I CAN LEAVE THIS SERAGLIO.

YOUR ACCOMMODATIONS OUTSIDE THE PALACE HAVE ALREADY BEEN ARRANGED.
PLEASE REST ASSURED, MY LADY.


THE KING WANTS ME TO LEAVE THE PALACE.
I SUPPOSE THIS COULD BE VIEWED AS HIS FAVOR!


YUANREN ...

MY LADY KNOWS TOO MANY SECRETS.
IT WOULD BE MORE APPROPRIATE IF YOU LEFT.

AND... WHAT ABOUT NINGHU?

DO YOU REALLY ...
WANT ME TO LEAVE?

I WILL DO EVERYTHING IN MY MY POWER..
TO MAKE MISS NINGHU THE QUEEN
STOP LYING TO YOURSELF!
NINGHU HAS NEITHER THE ABILITY NOR THE DESIRE TO BECOME QUEEN!
YOU'VE BEEN SO PERSISTENT WITH THIS PLOT...
BECAUSE IT'S REALLY TO YOUR ADVANTAGE!

YOUR MAJESTY...
ARE YOU REALLY LEAVING FOR THE SERAGLIO?
LEAD THE WAY!
I KNOW YOU INTEND TO GO TO MISS NINGHU'S ROOM.
I ONLY FEAR THAT THE DOWAGER EMPRESS WILL BE DISPLEASED.
IT WILL ALSO INFURIATE LORD LINGYU...
THIS MAY NOT BE ADVISABLE...
ZHAO LIN...

I HAVE SPOKEN OUT OF TURN.
PLEASE FORGIVE ME, YOUR MAJESTY.
THE KING INTENDS TO SPEND THE NIGHT HERE.
WHO IS INFURIATING WHO?
YOUR MAJESTY...
Sigh...

BUT FOR NINGHU...
I AM DOING THIS FOR MYSELF.
WHAT YOU SAY IS NOT WRONG...
THE BEST FATE SHE COULD MEET WOULD BE TO BECOME THE QUEEN.
THAT'S JUST YOUR OWN WISHFUL THINKING!
HE HAS SO MANY WIVES IN THE SERAGLIO,
AND YET HE NEVER TOUCHES ANY OF THEM.
NINGHU HAS NO WAY OF WINNING HIS LOVE.
THE KING DOESN'T EVEN LIKE WOMEN TO BEGIN WITH!

NINGHU DOES NOT NEED THE KING'S LOVE.
SHE ONLY NEEDS TO BECOME QUEEN.
YOU MEAN...
YOU ARE ALL DISMISSED.
YES, YOUR MAJESTY!

I HAVEN'T WORN WOMEN'S CLOTHES IN A LONG TIME, SO IT'S HARD TO ADJUST...
MY LADY, BE CAREFUL OF YOUR HEM!
OOF!

YOUR MAJESTY?

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Chapter 15: A Night of Mutiny
第十五回：兵變夜

YOUR MAJESTY?

WE HAVE NOT FINISHED PREPARING LADY NINGHU TO GREET YOUR MAJESTY.
WE WILL ACCEPT YOUR PUNISH-MENT!
GR... GREETINGS, YOUR MAJESTY!
SHE IS NOT MY WIFE!
I AM NOT HIS WIFE!
SHE ALONE WILL ATTEND TO ME TONIGHT.
YES!
YOU ARE DISMISSED!

COME HERE!
I... JUST...
I AM A CRIMINAL.
AND SO...
UH?
ARE YOU AFRAID OF YOUR KING?

COME HELP ME CHANGE MY CLOTHES.
Your majesty..
You remember what I said the first time we met...
YOUR KING WILL DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT YOU ARE SENTENCED.
DID YOU NOT ONCE CALL YOUR KING A CRIMINAL?
WHAT DOES THAT MATTER?
IN THE KING'S EYES,
YOU HAVE MERELY CHANGED FROM SERVANT
TO MAID.
Your majesty?

Does that mean... the rumor that the King wanted me as his wife... Was untrue?
YES! I WILL TAKE MY LEAVE.
IT IS GETTING LATE.
STAY HERE.
EH?
YOU ARE NOT ALLOWED TO LEAVE THIS ROOM UNTIL SUNRISE.
YOU SHOULD SLEEP.

SLEEP ON THE BED.
I WILL NOT GO NEAR YOU.
IF YOUR MAJESTY IS NOT GOING TO SLEEP
THEN I WILL NOT EITHER!
YOU SURELY ARE AFRAID OF YOUR KING.
IF THAT IS YOUR WISH
YOUR MAJESTY!
YOUR LORD CHAMBERLAIN AND THE LORD CHAMBERLAIN TO THE QUEEN HAVE ARRIVED
LET THEM IN.

GREETINGS, YOUR MAJESTY.
THE KING IS IN GOOD SPIRITS.
WE WILL BREAKFAST IN HERE.
YOU AND I WILL DINE TOGETHER.
YES!
I WILL ARRANGE IT AT ONCE.

His majesty didn't sleep at all last night
But he doesn't look tired.
NO, I AM HAPPY TO DO SO.
UNLESS YOU OBJECT?
Lord Ling...
Don't misunderstand... Nothing happened between the King and I...

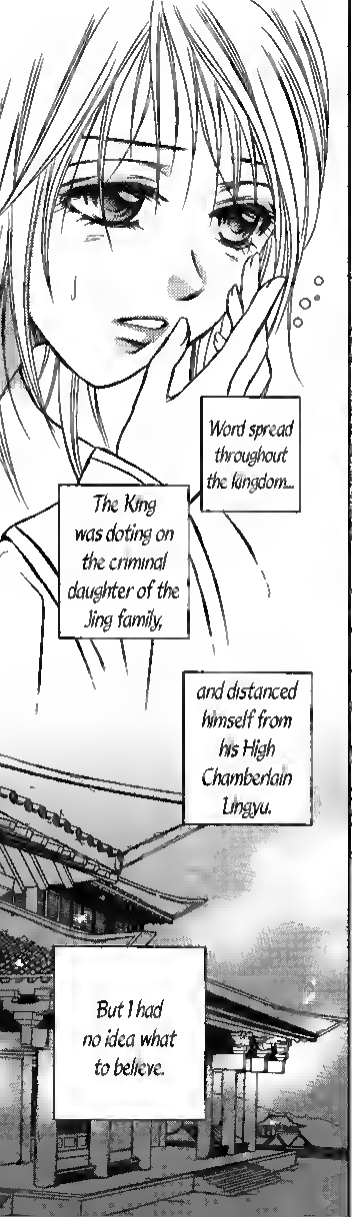
Lord
Ling

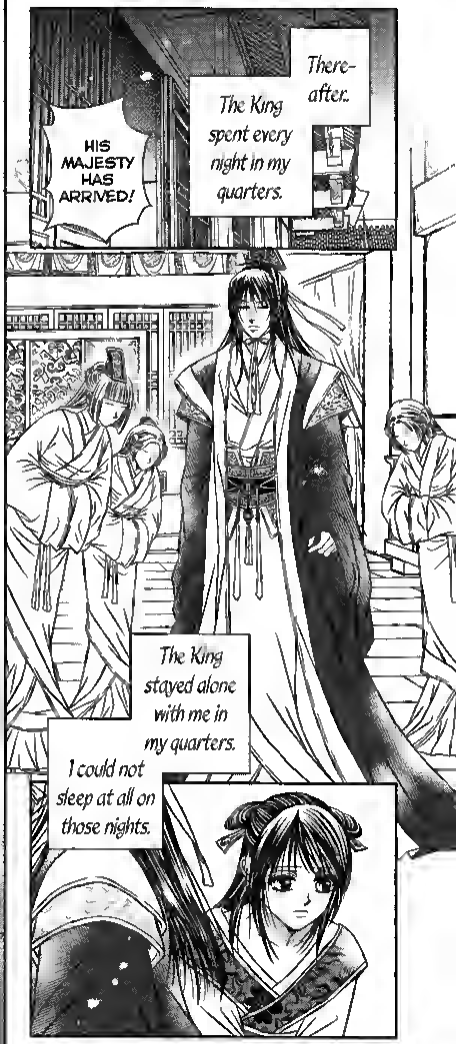
YOUR MAJESTY, YOU SHOULD NOT TAKE THAT JING GIRL AS A WIFE.
NOT ONLY IS SHE A CRIMINAL...
BUT HER FAMILY IS REDUCED TO COMMONERS.
AS THINGS ARE, SHE IS NOT SUITABLE.
SO?
DOES THE KING NEED YOUR PERMISSION TO ADD TO HIS SERAGLIO?
THE KING WILL DO AS PLEASES HIM.

YOUR MAJESTY!
IF ONLY THE LORD CHAMBERLAIN COULD BEAR ME A CHILD.
IF NOT FOR GRANDMOTHER'S CONCERN OVER AN HEIR,
THE KING WOULD SIMPLY DO NOTHING.
VERY WITTY, YOUR MAJESTY.
THAT IS INDEED IMPOSSIBLE.

MISS NINGHU, WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
YUANREN?
I THOUGHT I WOULD REST FOR A BIT...
Surely it's not true that I'll become the King's wife!
Brother Yuanren still addresses me as "miss."
ALSO... HAVE THE GIFTS ARRIVED YET?
GIFTS?
YOU STILL HAVE MUCH TO STUDY, MISS NINGHU.
I'M AFRAID YOU CANNOT DO THAT.

THESE ARE GIFTS FROM THE KING,
AS WELL AS OTHERS IN THE SERAGLIO,
AND FROM THE FEUDAL LORDS.
WHAT ARE...
WORD...
SPREADS QUICKLY INDEED!
All sorts of lavish gifts...
arrived one after another
It stirred up quite a fuss in the palace.


Word spread throughout the kingdom...
The King was doting on the criminal daughter of the Jing family,
and distanced himself from his High Chamberlain Lingyu.
But I had no idea what to believe.


HIS MAJESTY HAS ARRIVED!
The King spent every night in my quarters.
Thereafter..
The King stayed alone with me in my quarters.
I could not sleep at all on those nights.

Your majesty...
It's already been four sleepless nights, I think?
Why are you doing this?
BRING SOME WATER.
WATER.
YOUR MAJESTY!
COLD WATER IS FINE.
THE SERVANTS HAVE PREPARED HOT WATER!
I WILL TEST IT FIRST.

YOUR HAND.
I'M FINE...
OW!

...
Zzz...
JING NINGHU?
THE COURT PHYSICIAN CAN EXAMINE IT AT DAYBREAK.
HURRY AND RUN IT UNDER COOL WATER.
NOW I HAVE TO DO THIS?
Grr

WAKE UP ALREADY!
SLEEP ON THE BED...
I CAN'T SLEEP...
HIS MAJESTY ISN'T GOING TO SLEEP...
LORD LING...

The seventh night...
Even though the Dowager Queen disapproves...
The King still spends every night in my quarters
But in truth, the King has done nothing with me.
Everyone in the palace believes the King is completely in love with me.
YOU SHOULD SLEEP.
NO...
I CAN'T EVEN CONSIDER...
!

YOUR MAJESTY ...!
SLEEP SOUNDLY!
I WON'T COME HERE AGAIN.

KILL THEM ALL.

YOUR MAJESTY!
WHAT IS IT?
IT WAS AS YOUR MAJESTY PREDICTED.
AFTER SEVEN DAYS, THEY HAVE STARTED TO MOVE

I HAVE MOBILIZED THE ELITE TROOPS, AS YOU ORDERED.
WE WILL NOT LET EVEN ONE OF THEM ESCAPE.

AFTER WE HAVE CAPTURED THEM...
ZHAO LIN...
THEN WHAT?

The history books say that night, 3000 men stormed the eastern gate of the palace,
led by the nephew of the Queen Dowager,
one of the Yi family
Battle cries turned from "Down with the pandering Lingyu!"
"Down with the wicked Jing woman!"
Soon gave way to "Remove the unjust King! Take back the throne!"
But when the rebel army passed through the gates,
They were intercepted by 5000 soldiers of the Ding royal army.

The Yi family's troops were slaughtered in the ambush.
The King ordered the remainder of the Yi family executed
Only Lady Yi was spared from death and sent into exile.
YOU'RE BEING FAR TOO HARSH!
THIS IS ALL FOR YOUR OWN GOOD!
GRAND-MOTHER,
WITHOUT THE YI FAMILY, HOW DO YOU THINK YOU CAN CONTINUE TO BE SECURE IN YOUR POSITION AS KING?
YOU'RE STILL YOUNG AND IMPULSIVE!
YOU...
CAN ONLY BE SECURE WITHOUT THE YI FAMILY.
MY POSITION AS KING...

IS MISS NINGHU STILL ASLEEP?
LORD JING?
SHE SAID SHE HADN'T SLEPT IN MANY DAYS,
AND WANTED TO GET SOME REST.

The Yi family, the oldest and largest noble family in Ding Kingdom,
was completely wiped out from the capital in less than ten days.
I only came to know about it...
long after it was over.
THE KING IS STILL ASLEEP?
HOW UNUSUAL!
THE KING ORDERED...
IF YOU ARRIVE, I MUST LET YOU ENTER.

NO NEED.
I KNOW THE KING HAS NOT SLEPT IN MANY DAYS.
ALLOW ME TO ANNOUNCE YOU...
"MUST"...?
THE SOUND OF MY ANKLET WILL DISTURB HIM WHEN I ENTER.
I'M AFRAID THAT THE SOUND OF YOUR ANKLET
IS WHAT THE KING NEEDS TO SLEEP SOUNDLY.

HAHA! TO THINK THAT AN HONORABLE GENERAL LIKE LIKE YOURSELF CAN TALK LIKE THAT!
MAYBE YOU SHOULD BE LORD CHAMBERLAIN INSTEAD!
LORD CHAMBERLAIN!

Do I even have to explain?

Between the two of us

I HOPE THE KING SLEEPS WELL!

MISS NINGHU, A GUEST HAS ARRIVED.
A GUEST?
ZIJI?
YOU REALLY ARE SHOCKING...
YOU WENT FROM A SERVANT TO A DAUGHTER OF THE JING FAMILY...
AND EVEN GAINED THE KING'S AFFECTION AS HIS WIFE...
THAT'S NOT TRUE! THE KING HASN'T MADE ME HIS WIFE!
IF YOU'RE NOT HIS WIFE, THEN HOW ARE YOU DOING SO WELL?
I...

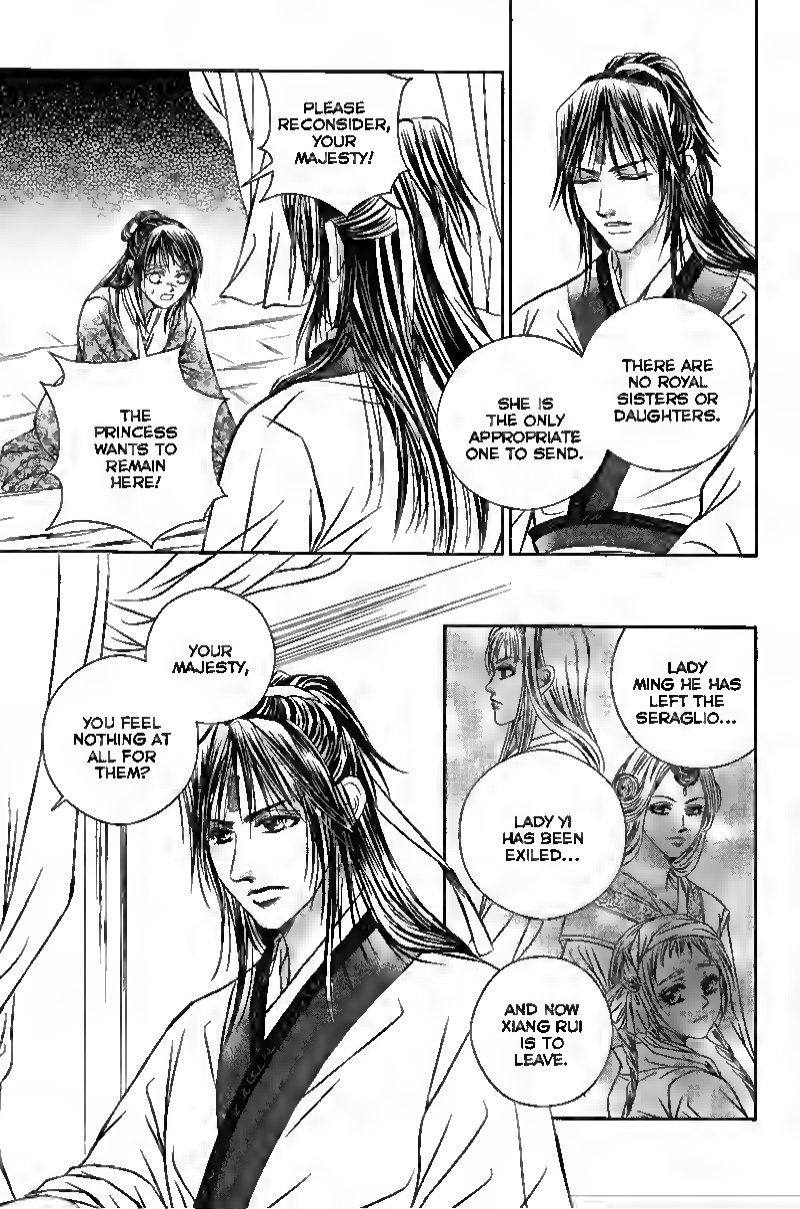
THE KING WANTS TO MARRY OFF PRINCESS XIANG RUI TO A NORTHERN KINGDOM?
A REQUEST?
ACTUALLY... I HAVE SOMETHING TO REQUEST OF YOU...
SINCE WE COULDN'T DEFEAT THEM, THE MINISTERS SUGGESTED THIS SOLUTION...
I WAS HOPING YOU MIGHT MAKE THE KING CHANGE HIS MIND!
YOU WANT ME TO PLEAD WITH THE KING?
WHY ON EARTH WOULD THE KING LISTEN TO ME?
HE MIGHT!
THE KING SPENT SEVEN NIGHTS WITH YOU...
HE'S NEVER DONE THAT WITH ANYONE ELSE IN THE SERAGLIO!
HE'LL AT LEAST LISTEN TO WHAT YOU HAVE TO SAY!

IF XIANG RUI GOES TO THAT BARBARIC PLACE...
SHE'LL DIE...
I'M BEGGING YOU!
XIANG RUI...
IS THE ONLY FRIEND I HAVE.
ZIJI...

THERE REALLY IS NO PREDICTING WHAT THE KING WILL DO...
I TRULY THOUGHT HE MIGHT HAVE LEFT YOU FOR THAT WOMAN...
BUT IT WAS ALL PART OF HIS PLOT...
NOT EVEN THE QUEEN DOWAGER WAS ABLE TO SAVE THEM.
A GROUP AS POWERFUL AS THE YI FAMILY...
I CAN'T BELIEVE THEY HAVE BEEN WIPED OUT.
THE KING...
IS NO LONGER A HELPLESS LITTLE BOY.

Since the time I began to follow him...
I knew this day would come...
HE HAS FINALLY BECOME A KING IN HIS OWN RIGHT.
HE PROBABLY DOESN'T NEED ME ANYMORE.
PERHAPS I WILL RETURN TO QI KINGDOM.
That is...
The home my brother has always wanted to return to...
And...
where I want to spend my life together with her.

YOU WANT TO SPEAK TO ME?
YES, YOUR MAJESTY!
PLEASE DON'T MARRY PRINCESS XIANG RUI OFF TO THE NORTHERN KINGDOM.
SHE IS ONE OF YOUR WIVES, AFTER ALL.


PLEASE RECONSIDER, YOUR MAJESTY!
THE PRINCESS WANTS TO REMAIN HERE!
THERE ARE NO ROYAL SISTERS OR DAUGHTERS.
SHE IS THE ONLY APPROPRIATE ONE TO SEND.
YOUR MAJESTY,
YOU FEEL NOTHING AT ALL FOR THEM?
LADY MING HE HAS LEFT THE SERAGLIO...
LADY YI HAS BEEN EXILED...
AND NOW XIANG RUI IS TO LEAVE.

JING NINGHU,
YOU STILL DO NOT UNDER-STAND?
THEY MAY HAVE HAD THEIR OWN REASONS FOR STAYING HERE,
BUT THEY ARE MERELY THE KING'S POSSESSIONS.
IN THIS PALACE, THERE IS NO LOVE...
NO TOGETHER-NESS...
IN THE SERAGLIO,
ALL LOVE IS A LIE.
EVEN YOU WILL BECOME LIKE THEM.

UNFORTUNATE THAT HE IS MY TOY.
YOU LOVE LINGYU, CORRECT?
YOU WILL EVENTUALLY BECOME PART OF THE SERAGLIO.
WASN'T THAT YOUR GOAL FROM THE START?
YOU TWO CAN NEVER BE TOGETHER.

In this place...
Hating a person...
is far easier than loving them...

Even though I'm in the palace...
I still want to love another!
Is the King so heartless with everyone?
IN THIS PALACE, THERE IS NO LOVE, NO TOGETHERNESS.
MISS NINGHU, WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
THE KING HAS FORBIDDEN YOU FROM LEAVING YOUR QUARTERS!

YOU WISH TO SEE LORD LINGYU?
LORD LING'S PERSONAL ATTENDANT WILL NOT LET ANYONE SEE HIM.
PLEASE TELL HIM IT'S ME, NINGHU...
My lord has a new personal servant?
PLEASE LET ME SEE HIM!
BUT...
PLEASE LEAVE! DON'T MAKE THINGS DIFFICULT FOR ME...

YOU ARE...
PLEASE DO NOT DISTURB THE LORD CHAMBERLAIN'S REST.
WHAT IS ALL THIS FUSS?
I SAID NO ONE MAY ENTER.
BUT SHE...
ZILU?
I AM NOT.
YOU KNOW ZILU?

I AM ZILU'S YOUNGER TWIN BROTHER,
ZIMO.

Scanner : Maris
Translator : Azakura
Proofreader : Maris
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Quality Control : Maris
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Chapter 16: A Bloody Kiss
第十六回・血吻

ZIMO...
ZILU'S YOUNGER BROTHER?
OH, IT'S YOU...
THE JING DAUGHTER.
THE GOOD THING IS THAT I STILL HAVE A YOUNGER BROTHER
Now I remember! Zilu mentioned it before...

FIRST YOU DISGUISED YOURSELF AS LORD JING'S NEW SERVANT...
THEN YOU USED ZILU TO GET CLOSE TO LORD LING.
WHAT?
HOW IS ZILU DOING NOW?
HE DIDN'T DIE. ARE YOU DISAPPOINTED?
AND THEN YOU TOOK ZILU'S PLACE AS LORD LING'S PERSONAL ATTENDANT.
AND NOW YOU EVEN USED LORD LING TO GET CLOSE TO THE KING...
INGENIOUS PLANNING...

IT'S NOT LIKE THAT!
AND WHY ARE YOU HERE?
ZILU SAID YOU WERE THE ONLY SON LEFT AT HOME...
YES.
NOW THAT I HAVE ENTERED THE PALACE,
OUR FAMILY WILL COME TO AN END.
BUT I DID THIS ALL FOR ZILU,
SO I HAVE NO REGRETS.
PLEASE REMEMBER ...
I WILL NOT FORGIVE...
THE ONE WHO PUT ZILU IN HIS CURRENT STATE.
He's come to get revenge for Zilu...

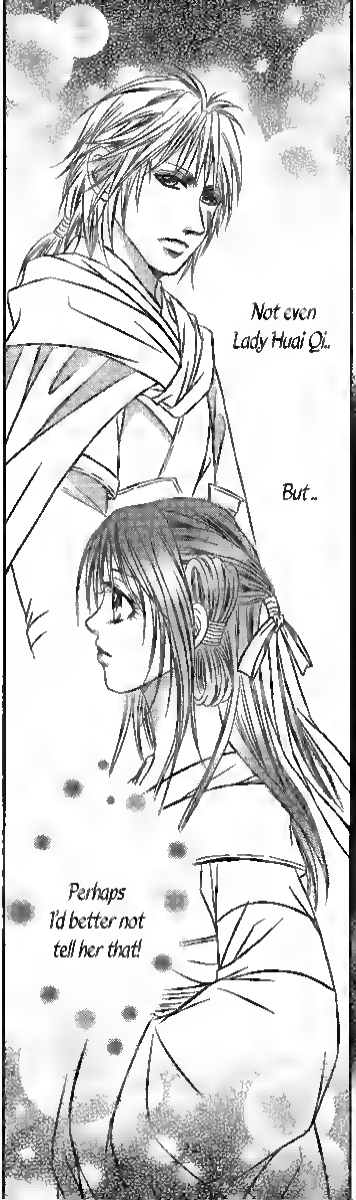
YES, MY LORD.
BUT YOU STILL NEED REST.
I ASKED THEM TO COME BACK ANOTHER DAY.
DID SOMEONE WANT TO SEE ME?
HOW ATTENTIVE OF YOU...

MY LORD, I WILL ATTEND TO YOU...
WITH EVEN MORE CARE THAN MY BROTHER ZILU.
OH?
INDEED, NOW THAT YOU'VE BEEN SERVING ME...
I HAVE BEEN SLEEPING BETTER THAN BEFORE.
IT IS A SECRET RECIPE I LEARNED FROM MY MOTHER.
I AM GLAD IT SERVES YOU WELL, MY LORD.
YOU MAY LEAVE.
YES.

ZIMO?
HE CAME TO THE PALACE SHORTLY AFTER ZILU RETURNED HOME.
BECAUSE OF ZILU'S SITUATION, WE MADE AN EXCEPTION SO THAT HE COULD ENTER THE PALACE.
AND HOW DID HE BECOME LORD LING'S PERSONAL ATTENDANT?
ZIMO HAD HOPED TO TO SERVE YOU, MISS NINGHU,
BUT WHEN LORD LING FOUND OUT, HE REQUESTED ZIMO SERVE HIM INSTEAD.
A PERSONAL REQUEST?
LORD LING PERSONALLY REQUESTED HIM.

My lord...
He did that for my sake?
Zimo thinks I'm the one who put Zilu in harm's way.
But the real reason Zilu drowned was...
THOUGH I DO NOT UNDERSTAND WHAT LORD LING IS THINKING,
HE IS VERY CLEVER. YOU NEED NOT BE WORRIED ABOUT HIM.
BESIDES, HE CAN CHOOSE HIS OWN PERSONAL ATTENDANT.
THERE IS NOTHING I CAN DO ABOUT IT.
THEN...
THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY...
I WANT TO SEE HIS MAJESTY.
BROTHER YUANREN,

MY LORD?
WHAT IS THAT?
MISS JING.
THAT IS THE KING'S SERVANT.
HE WAS POISONED WHILE TESTING THE KING'S FOOD.
WHAT? THEN THE KING...
HIS MAJESTY WAS NOT HARMED.



His majesty...

has never allowed any of his wives to enter his bedchamber...

Why...
There are no servants?
JING NINGHU.
YOUR MAJESTY!
GREETINGS ...
Thank goodness, his majesty looks as well as ever...
YOUR MAJESTY!

LORD LING HAS A NEW ATTENDANT, ZIMO.
CHOOSE WHERE HE WORKS.
PLEASE LET EITHER LORD JING OR MYSELF...
WHY DID YOU ASK TO SEE ME?
I HAVE A REQUEST FOR YOUR MAJESTY.
IF YOU WERE STILL POSING AS MY SERVANT,
IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN YOU DEAD OUT THERE.
SUCH A TRIVIAL MATTER. WHY DO YOU...
UGH...
YOUR MAJESTY?

ESPECIALLY NOT LINGYU!
HE CANNOT KNOW!
THEN... LORD LING...!
WHAT'S WRONG, YOUR MAJESTY?
I AM FINE...
I WILL FETCH LORD ZHAO!
AND THE COURT PHYSICIAN ...
NO ONE MUST KNOW!
THAT IS NOT NECESSARY ...
IN THAT BOX...
THERE IS AN ANTIDOTE.
Your majesty?

Who tried to poison the King?
THIS ANTIDOTE ...
WAS LEFT BEHIND BY THE PREVIOUS COURT PHYSICIAN.
I WILL BE FINE AFTER TAKING IT.

I WAS CARELESS THIS TIME.
IT SHOULD BE EFFECTIVE AGAINST MOST POISONS.
WHEN TAKEN OVER TEN DAYS,
THE OLD KING PREPARED IT.
AND...
WHY CAN'T LORD LING KNOW?
DING KINGDOM WOULD BE PLUNGED INTO CHAOS.
IF ANYONE KNEW THE KING WAS VULNERABLE...
AS THINGS ARE NOW...
WHY KEEP IT A SECRET THAT YOU WERE POISONED?
YOUR MAJESTY ...

YOUR MAJESTY, ARE YOU WORRIED THAT LORD LING MIGHT BE SUSPECTED?
OR IF LORD LING LEARNED WHO THE POISONER IS...?
JING NINGHU!
YOU DO NOT NEED TO KNOW THIS MUCH.
IN THAT CASE,
ALLOW ME THIS, YOUR MAJESTY.
FOR THESE NEXT TEN DAYS,
LET ME PREPARE AND SERVE YOU YOUR MEDICINE.
I WILL TAKE CARE NOT TO LET ANYONE KNOW.
AND I WON'T BREATHE A WORD TO LORD LING.

I JUST BELIEVE...
I...
DO NOT WISH TO DECEIVE YOU, YOUR MAJESTY.
WHAT YOU ARE DOING...
IS ALSO FOR LORD LING'S SAKE.
YOU DO THIS...
FOR LINGYU'S SAKE.
YOU CARE FOR HIM,
AND WOULD DO ANYTHING FOR HIM.
JING NINGHU ...
YOU CANNOT LIE TO YOUR KING.

So I stayed in the King's bedchamber
I personally brewed the antidote...
and served it to the King those ten days.
The King did not meet with his ministers, even though they waited outside his bedchamber.
This led to speculation among them
The fact that the King allowed me into his bedchamber...
also led to gossip in the seraglio.
The King easily fell ill while suffering from the effects of the poison.
But he still refused to see the court physician.
Which worried me greatly.

YOUR MAJESTY!
SHANG KINGDOM'S MINISTERS REQUEST AN AUDIENCE.
YOUR MAJESTY HAS NOT MET WITH A SINGLE MINISTER IN DAYS.
THE COURT IS WORRIED ABOUT YOUR HEALTH.
THEY ARE DESPERATE TO SEE YOU.
ARE THEY WORRIED THE KING IS DEAD?
THEN LET THEM SEE ME!
YOUR MAJESTY!
ZHAO LIN,
LET THEM ENTER.

GREETINGS, YOUR MAJESTY!
LONG LIVE THE KING!
SEEING YOUR MAJESTY WELL RELIEVES OUR WORRIES.
WE ARE CURRENTLY INVESTIGATING THE POISONING INCIDENT.
REST ASSURED, YOUR MAJESTY.
Can the King handle this stress?

The King has refused to see Lord Lingyu for the past few days...
It's really all to protect him.
It's Lord Ling!
Lord Ling should be the one the King feels closest to...
So why hide this from him?
Your majesty?

He'll be found out...
YOUR MAJESTY!
YOUR MAJESTY?
HMPH ...
I... WISH TO SPEND MORE TIME WITH THIS BEAUTY...
YOU ARE ALL DISMISSED!

Lord Lingyu is so cold...
He must be angry with me

SO THAT'S WHY THE KING HASN'T ATTENDED COURT FOR THE PAST FEW DAYS.
HE MADE US WORRY FOR NOTHING!
BECAUSE HE WANTED TO BE TOGETHER WITH THAT JING WOMAN!
BUT TO THINK HE'D INDULGE HIMSELF THIS MUCH!

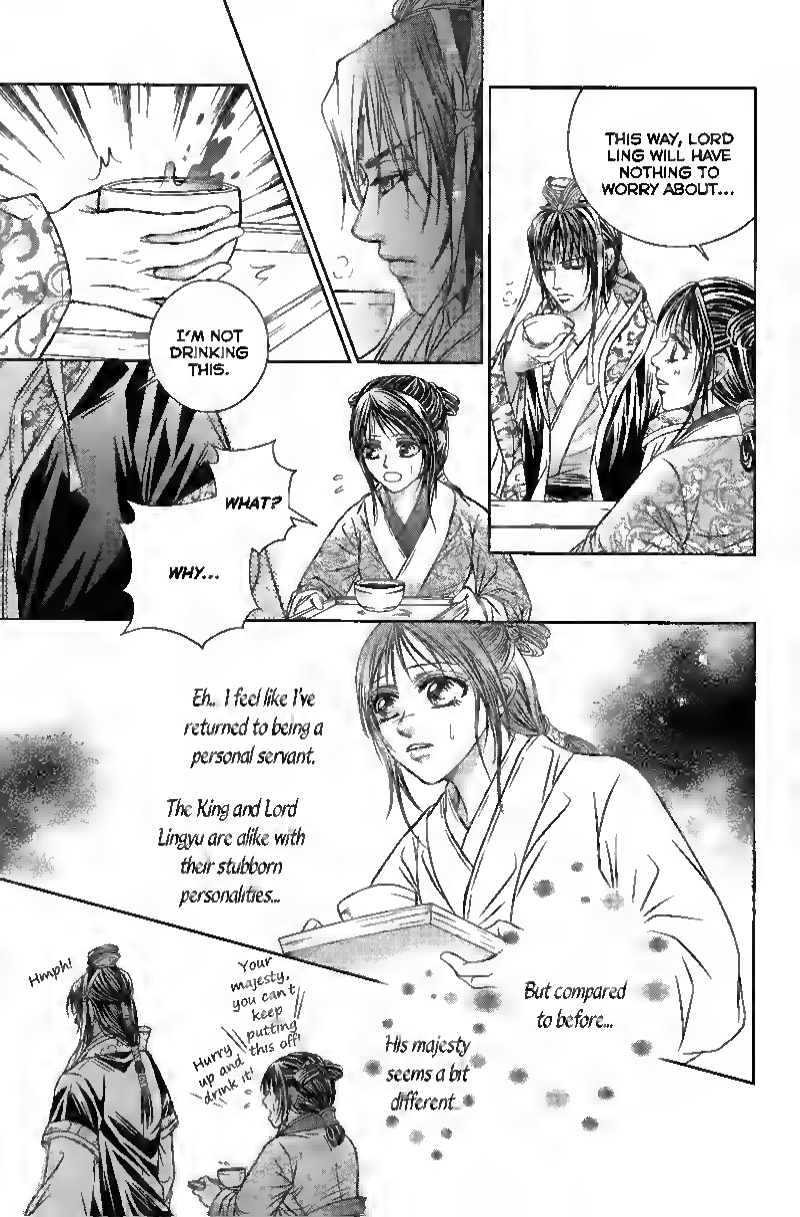
YOU LOOK PALE TO ME, YOUR MAJESTY...
I AM FINE.

MY LORD?
THEN I MUST IMPOSE ON MISS JING TO TAKE CARE OF HIS MAJESTY.
I WILL TAKE MY LEAVE.

The King returned to matters as usual
No one found out that he'd been poisoned
The antidote left behind by the old King was effective.
On the seventh day...
The King had mostly recovered.
I think..
The King must know who poisoned him.
That's why he's hiding it instead of trying to find out who did it

I AM RECOVERED NOW.
I WON'T DRINK IT.
YOUR MAJESTY!
I HAVE ALREADY TESTED IT FOR POISON.
HERE IS TODAY'S HEALTH TONIC.
I can't say antidote in case someone hears.
YOUR MAJESTY!
DON'T BE STUBBORN, YOUR MAJESTY!
TAKE IT AWAY!
YOU HAVE TO DRINK IT!
I SAID I DON'T WANT TO!
YOU HAVE TO DRINK IT FOR EXACTLY TEN DAYS!
YOU GUYS ARE DISMISSED.
YES!
I WON'T DRINK IT NO MATTER WHAT YOU SAY!
JING NINGHU! YOU...

Eh?
FINE, I'LL DRINK IT!
MISS JING, YOU CAN'T FORCE THE KING TO...
I... WILL TAKE MY LEAVE, THEN.
THAT'S GREAT!
YOUR MAJESTY!
HMPH...


THIS WAY, LORD LING WILL HAVE NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT...
I'M NOT DRINKING THIS.
WHAT?
WHY...
Eh.. I feel like I've returned to being a personal servant.
The King and Lord Lingyu are alike with their stubborn personalities...
But compared to before...
His majesty seems a bit different.
Your majesty, you can't keep putting this off!
Hurry up and drink it!
Hmph!

I'm missing some medicinal herbs...
It's good that Brother Yuanren has some.
I must hurry back and brew the antidote.
QUICK, FOLLOW ME!
BROTHER KUICHENG?

WHY ARE YOU HERE IN THE PALACE?
SHH!
JUST FOLLOW ME QUICKLY!
THE KING HAS STRIPPED THE JING FAMILY OF ALL TITLES AND EXILED US TO THE BORDERS OF THE COUNTRY...
OUR DAYS ARE MISERABLY DIFFICULT, AND WE CANNOT BECOME OFFICIALS...
IT'S ALL BECAUSE YUANREN BETRAYED US!
DON'T MAKE ANY EXCUSES FOR HIM!
DEATH TO THAT BASTARD!
BROTHER KUICHENG...
YOU MUST REMEMBER, HE IS NO JING, HE IS OUR ENEMY!
ONE DAY, I WILL GET MY HANDS ON HIM!

EVERYONE IN THE CAPITAL KNOWS THE KING IS VERY MUCH IN LOVE WITH YOU.
NOT ONLY DID HE STAY IN YOUR QUARTERS FOR SEVEN NIGHTS,
HE ALLOWED YOU TO ENTER HIS BEDCHAMBER.
BROTHER KUICHENG?
AT THE TIME, I WAS AGAINST FATHER SENDING YOU HERE.
YOU ARE THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN SAVE THE JING FAMILY.
BUT NOW...
NINGHU ...
DON'T FORGET, YOU ARE A JING.
TO REGAIN OUR STATUS, YOU MUST...
BECOME QUEEN TO THE KING!
OUR FAMILY'S ELDERS HAVE SENT ME TO REMIND YOU...
THIS IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY.

I HAVE TO GO!
I WILL THINK OF A WAY TO COME BACK!
YOU SHOULD HURRY AND LEAVE AS WELL!
DON'T FORGET...
YOU ARE NOW OUR ENTIRE FAMILY'S...
LAST PLAYABLE PAWN

YOUR MAJESTY?
THE POISON IS STILL IN EFFECT?
I'M FINE...
I'M ONLY TIRED.
YOUR MAJESTY HAS ALREADY TAKEN THE MEDICINE FOR TEN DAYS.
THE TIME OF THE ANTIDOTE'S EFFECT HAS ENDED.
WHAT IS IT?
YOUR MAJESTY ...
I HAVE A REQUEST OF YOU...
PLEASE LET ME OUT OF THE PALACE TO BE IN EXILE WITH MY FAMILY.
DON'T EXEMPT ME FROM THAT SENTENCE!

AND IF THE KING WON'T LET YOU LEAVE?
THEN...
YES.
AND EVEN BE BRANDED A CRIMINAL?
YOU WANT TO LEAVE THE PALACE?
PLEASE LET ME REMAIN IN THE SERAGLIO,
TO SERVE YOU, YOUR MAJESTY.

I WILL FORGET LORD LING.
My head hurts...
In continuous bursts of pain...
I WILL SERVE YOUR MAJESTY WITH ALL OF MY HEART.
YOU WOULD BE BRANDED A CRIMINAL, OR WOULD REMAIN IN THE SERAGLIO.
ARE YOU THREATENING YOUR KING?
I WOULD NEVER DARE.
WHAT OF LINGYU?
THE ONE YOU CARE FOR...

THEN...
COME HERE.
AREN'T DAUGHTERS OF THE JING FAMILY ..
SUPPOSED TO BE SKILLED IN PLEASURING MEN?

UGH!

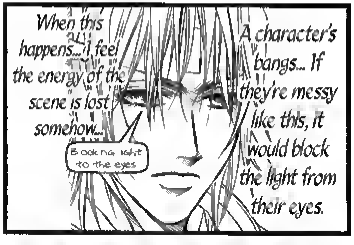
Just a pawn to be manipulated to anyone's will.
I've only been a disgrace to my family
Right from the very start...

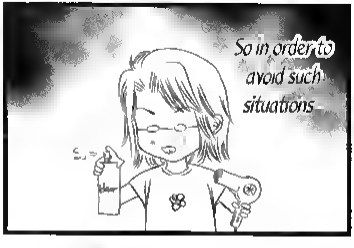
HALT!
JING KUICHENG...
YOU GUYS...
BY ORDER OF THE KING,
WE ARE TO DETAIN THE CRIMINAL IN THE PALACE.

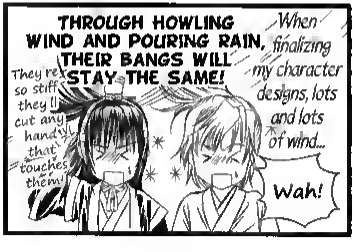
YOU ARE RIGHT, YOUR MAJESTY...
I'M REALLY... NOT WILLING TO...
AS I SAID, YOU CANNOT LIE TO YOUR KING
YOU ARE UNWILLING.
HOWEVER ...
I DON'T MIND THAT...

Beneath this warm and gentle gesture of love...
A hidden tinge of blood.
Only long after...
did I realize...
The feelings that his majesty was after...
were just like that kiss.

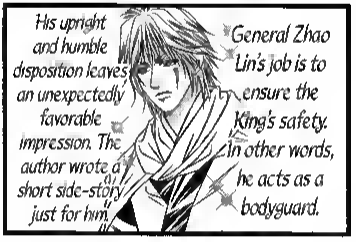
Bangs as Unmovable as Mountains

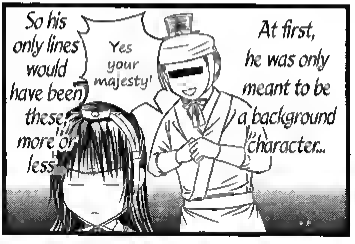

When this happens... I feel the energy of the scene is lost somehow...
Looking right to the eyes
A character's bangs... If they're messy like this, it would block the light from their eyes.

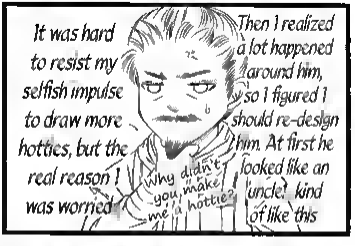


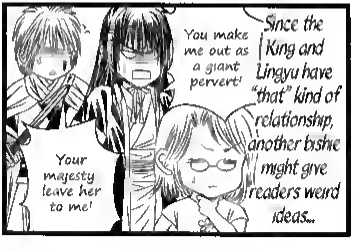

THROUGH HOWLING WIND AND POURING RAIN, THEIR BANGS WILL STAY THE SAME!
They're so stiff they'll cut any hand that touches them!
When finalizing my character designs, lots and lots of wind...
Wah!

Lil' Zhao?

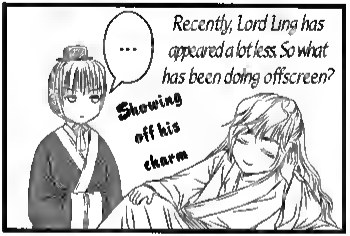

His upright and humble disposition leaves an unexpectedly favorable impression. The author wrote a short side-story just for him.
General Zhao Lin's job is to ensure the King's safety. In other words, he acts as a bodyguard.


So his only lines would have been these, more or less
Yes your majesty!
At first, he was only meant to be a background character...

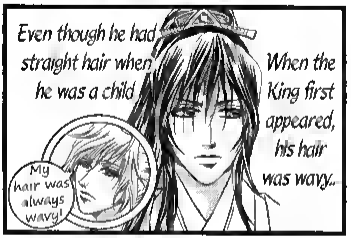

It was hard to resist my selfish impulse to draw more hotties, but the real reason I was worried
Why didn't you make me hotties?
Then I realized a lot happened around him, so I figured I should re-design him. At first he looked like an uncle kind of like this


You make me out as a giant pervert!
Your majesty leave her to me!
Since the King and Lingyu have "that" kind of relationship, another bishie might give readers weird ideas...

An Inactive Lord Ling



The Evolution of the King's Hair?



And it became straight again
So I immediately put the King's hair through a straightening iron.
There's no difference I'm always handsome

But now he looks really similar to another man with straight dark hair.
I'll have you know I always apply olive oil and take good care of my hair

Don't you dare!
I might as well shave you bald!
I'll put more effort in making the characters look different from each other!
So from now on.